

Message Text

PAGE 01 NATO 00909 171842Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W
-----171843 081956/43

O R 171750Z FEB 77
FM USMISSION NATO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1779
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

S E C R E T USNATO 0909

EXDIS

DEPT PLEASE PASS SECDEF

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: NATO, OCON, MILL, AWACS
SUBJECT: NATO AEW: IMPACT ON NATO AEW OF POSSIBLE REVISION IN THE
US E-3A FORCE

REF: STATE 36127 DTG 170140Z FEB 77

1. AT THIS DELICATE JUNCTURE IN NEGOTIATIONS ON THE FUTURE OF THE NATO AEW PROGRAM, I BELIEVE THAT CHANGES IN THE US AWACS PROGRAM OF THE KIND SUGGESTED REFTEL AT MINIMUM WOULD BE EXTREMELY UNSETTLING AND AT WORST COULD SERIOUSLY HARM THE PROSPECTS FOR A NATO AEW SYSTEM. ANY SUCH CHANGES WOULD LIKELY BE INTERPRETED BY OUR ALLIES AS REFLECTING A DIMINUTION OF US CONVICTION ABOUT THE USEFULNESS OF THE SYSTEM. MOREOVER, A SLOWER US PRODUCTION RATE COULD RESULT IN INCREASED COSTS FOR THE NATO PROGRAM. FINALLY, TERMINATION OF THE US PRODUCTION RUN AT THE END OF FY 77 WOULD RAISE THE NATO PROGRAM COSTS AND WOULD SHIFT THE REQUIREMENT FOR NATO FUNDS TO THE EARLY YEARS OF THE NATO PROGRAM, FURTHER EXACERBATING THE FRONT-END FUNDING PROBLEM WHICH ALREADY EXISTS BECAUSE MOST ALLIES HAVE NOT PROGRAMMED FUNDS FOR NATO AEW.

SECRET

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2. THE SLOW-DOWN OPTION, SUGGESTED IN PARAGRAPH 1A OF THE REFTEL, WOULD PROVOKE SOMEWHAT LESS ALLIED CONCERN, BUT I BELIEVE THAT EITHER WOULD HAVE NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES.

3. THUS, I RECOMMEND AGAINST MAKING ANY CHANGE IN THE US AWACS PROGRAM WHICH COULD BE MISINTERPRETED BY OUR ALLIES AS SUGGESTING THE US IS HAVING SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT EITHER THE US OR NATO AEW PROGRAMS.
STRAUSZ-HUPE

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED SECDEF.

SECRET

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